surprising, however, since the procedure goes back to Roman law, and one finds the same legal procedures in the Danish laws and in many other places in medieval legislation.

A more comprehensive comparative perspective also would have strengthened Ekholst's main argument that criminal liability in Sweden became more individualized during the Middle Ages and that gender influenced both the evaluation of the crime and the punishment. The Swedish development seen through the lens of gender and criminal law can be described as moving from sanctions that resembled provisions in neighboring countries, especially in Denmark in the thirteenth century, to national laws imbued with a more distinguished legal culture that differed from laws in the other Nordic countries.

Even though the lack of comparison means that one does not get a fully contextualized picture of the use of gender in Swedish criminal law, *A Punishment for Each Criminal* will still be of interest to people working with criminal law and gender. The introduction provides a very good frame for the investigation, and the book is well written.

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Claire Sponsler. *The Queen's Dumbshows: John Lydgate and the Making of Early Theater*. (The Middle Ages Series.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. Pp. 308. $65.00.

Recent years have seen an explosion of interest in John Lydgate, but he is still best known as the writer of the long narrative poems, *The Fall of Princes* and *The Troy Book*; less studied are the numerous verses that he composed for performances of various kinds, theatrical and ceremonial. These verses present great interpretive challenges, precisely because of their intimate connection with performances, which cannot be readily reimagined today. The manuscripts in which they are preserved, many of them copied by John Shirley, often record the occasion for which they were written but contain very few details of the visual display that accompanied them. Claire Sponsler's important book maintains that we must nonetheless study them, gleaning whatever information we can about their performance histories along with the reasons they were written down and the ways they were subsequently read. This is vital, she argues, if we are to understand the centrality of performance to late medieval culture, as well as the movement of texts within and between performative and literary cultures. Furthermore, Sponsler argues, close study of Lydgate's masques and mummings may enable us to discern traces of the roles of women in late-medieval performance. Sponsler's suggestion that Queen Catherine might have commissioned some of Lydgate's work, and that his masques might seek to offer her guidance and models of action, lies behind her provocative title, *The Queen's Dumbshows: John Lydgate and the Making of Early Theater*.

Sponsler's admirably clear and informative introduction outlines the state of scholarship on early theater and relates it to recent discussion of the late medieval vernacular and of Chaucer's promotion of the literary in opposition to the theatrical. Arguing that medieval scribes tend to transform theatrical texts into literary ones, Sponsler nonetheless notes that the materiality of both performance and manuscript facilitates an approach to the study of such texts that considers transmission through manuscript and performance side by side, not necessarily in exclusive opposition. Her first chapter considers the role of Shirley, whose manuscripts preserve most of the Lydgate masques and mummings that survive. Shirley erases most of the details of the live performance of Lydgate's verses, but nonetheless gives us glimpses of the ceremonies for which they were composed: he adds glosses for the verses, which perhaps enable the reader to grasp meanings that would have been visually transmitted in the original performance, and makes possible the movement of Lydgate's verses into a literary culture.

The second chapter considers "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism: London Mummings and Disguisings." The oxymoron of "vernacular cosmopolitanism," in which "we imagine that the parochial and demotic can coexist with the transnational and sophisticated" (66), is demonstrated as the animating spirit of Lydgate's civic compositions, which deploy styles and themes taken from continental writers, often mediated by Chaucer, to compliment civic authorities and celebrate the idea of the city of London. The third chapter then discusses "Perfoming Pictures," Lydgatean verses that were composed for presentation not on the page but in a wall-painting or tapestry. Noting that Lydgate himself testified to the power of visual representation to inspire writing, and also that he describes his own processes of writing in terms drawn from the visual crafts, Sponsler argues for the importance of reading words and pictures as "mutually supporting." The author suggests that study of Lydgate's verses in these material contexts can "offer a corrective to the dominance of the written word in our own era" as well as "the unavoidable fact that written texts remain our best, and often only, sources of information about medieval culture" (96).

The chapters that follow also engage with the relationship between the textual and the material: "Performance and Gloss" in the *Procession of Corpus Christi*; "Inscription and Ceremony" in the 1432 Royal Entry; and, perhaps most intriguingly, "Edible Theater," on the "subtleties" that Lydgate composed for the coronation banquet of Henry V. Chapter 7, on "The Queen's Dumbshows," then presents a shift of focus by considering what the *Disguising at Hertford,* the *Mumming at Eltham*, and the *Mumming at Windsor* might reveal when read as performances aimed at, and possibly commissioned by, Queen Catherine of Valois. In this chapter, Sponsler makes a compelling argument for the importance of at least one royal woman in the history of early English theater.

The final chapter, "On Drama's Trail," provides an

example of the challenges but also potential fruits of close study of Lydgate's performance texts, making a compelling, if ultimately not entirely conclusive, case for Lydgate's authorship of *A Mumming of the Seven Philosophers*. Such authorship attribution is, and should continue to be, a central concern of medieval scholars, Sponsler argues, since attribution of a text to an author facilitates further work of contextualization essential to building our view of late medieval material and literary culture. In an afterword, the author then develops her position that the study of early performance generally, and of Lydgate in particular, is essential to cultural study.

This is a readable, informative, inspiring, and highly useful book. The author has digested and clearly laid out a huge swathe of current scholarship on performance, vernacularity, paleography, and medieval London. The theoretical frameworks that Sponsler provides in each chapter are extremely helpful in making some sense of these elusive but important texts. If the chapters sometimes seem a little disparate in approach, this is because they are guided by the nature of the evidence available for each Lydgatean work: the questions asked arise sensibly from that evidence, and never feel imposed upon them. The book is clear and elegant, providing helpful background discussion where necessary so that the reader who is not a Lydgate specialist will nonetheless be able to follow its arguments. The notes and bibliography are extensive and will provide great assistance to researchers. The reader is also assisted by high quality black and white reproductions of leaves of the manuscripts discussed.

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EUROPE: EARLY MODERN AND MODERN

Andrew Pettegree. *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014. Pp. 445. $35.00.

News is a slippery subject and, in some ways, so is Andrew Pettegree's wide-ranging and well-written book, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself*. On one level, the book traces the rise of the newspaper, but paralleling, and ultimately overshadowing, that argument is the story of what Pettegree calls the "complex communications environment" of the early modern period (364). His news world is one where oral rumor, manuscript newsletters, ballads, broadsheets, and news pamphlets mixed and mingled and where the newspaper rarely dominated. For Pettegree, the invention of the modern concept of news depended on the intersection of these different forms, the growth of an infrastructure for news, and the propelling impetus of specific events. The recreation of this mixed news environment is the real strength of the book, but, because of this, the emphasis on the newspaper feels like a distraction rather than a desired end point.

The book covers the period from around 1400 to 1800, touches on many areas of Western Europe, especially the Habsburg Empire, England, and France, and is split into three sections. The first covers 1400 to 1600 and explores early attempts to control and publish news. The second section, which examines 1600 to around 1660, investigates the intertwined establishment of the newspaper press and postal service during a period of war and rebellion. The final section, stretching from 1660 to 1800, looks at how the journal, advertisements, and revolutionary politics created the regularly published, critical, and popular newspaper we expect to encounter today.

The book bursts with discussions about different forms of news. In fact, the newspaper often takes second, if not third or fourth, place simply because it was not as interesting to readers. It avoided domestic news, refused to explain events, and was easily censored. The newspaper was the heir to the newsletter, which specialized in whispering news to the elite. The printed form that really mattered was the news pamphlet. It gave people what they wanted: exciting news about a single event, which often placed it in a wider moral or explanatory context. Furthermore, Pettegree reminds us of the importance retained by oral news, ballads sung on the street, and broadsides ripe with illustrations. Pettegree weaves in these forms to insist upon the complex nature of this communicative world, but also to show how different mediums influenced each other and inspired publishers to create the newspaper.

However, this is not a book simply about news forms. Two sections begin with the postal system. This organizational decision points to Pettegree's insistence, which I applaud, that the development of an infrastructure through which news could travel helped "invent" news. The construction of such an infrastructure depended on the growing power of rulers who needed to communicate with larger and more centralized territories. He focuses upon the Habsburg emperors, who eventually set up the most successful postal system run by the Taxis family. Pettegree is careful to illustrate that this was a slow process and, especially until the 1620s, the official post often overlapped with postal systems run by merchants, cities, and universities. Highlighting the post allows Pettegree to point to the importance of powerful states in this process. They often built the infrastructure upon which news rode and they both nurtured and delayed the emergence of news culture. By emphasizing the role of the state and communicative infrastructures, Pettegree advances his larger argument that the emergence of our news world was multi-faceted, complex, and dependent upon more than print.

For Pettegree, these growing infrastructures and multiple forms created spaces for discussion, but specific events often caused change. The Reformation helped create new types of printed news and was sustained by the power of print. The Battle of Lepanto, the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and the Spanish Armada were distinct news events that heightened a sense of European-wide conflict. The Thirty Years' War and the